

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 311126 TOSEC 340027

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 17788 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 27 DEC

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S E C R E T CAIRO 17788

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, US, UN

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO FAHMY ON UN RESOLUTION AND PEACE PROCESS

REF (A) STATE 303711 (B) CAIRO 17487

SUMMARY: AFTER SEVERAL UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS, I FINALLY
HAD OPPORTUNITY TODAY CONVEY TO FAHMY IN DETAIL ALL
POINTS CITED REFTEL A. HE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AND ASKED
THAT I EXPRESS HIS APPRECIATION. HE MADE TWO OBSERVA-
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TIONS. FIRST, MY PRESENTATION WAS EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD
HEARD ON PAST OCCASIONS WHEN WE HAD TAKEN POSITIONS IN
SUPPORT OF ISRAEL. SECOND, NOTHING THAT I HAVE CONVEYED
ALTERED THE FACT THAT THE USG STOOD ALONE WITH ISRAEL
AGAINST A RESOLUTION THAT WAS VERY MILD. CONTRARY TO
OUR EARLIER EXPLANATORY STATEMENT, THE EGYPTIAN RESOLU-

TION CONTAINED NO REFERENCE, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO THE PLO. HAD THERE BEEN ANYTHING BUT USG/ISRAELI COLLUSION, WE COULD HAVE ABSTAINED ON SUCH A MILD RESOLUTION WHICH ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO OTHER STATES HAD APPROVED. GOE WANTS AN AMERICAN, NOT AN ISRAELI, POSITION, FROM THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION OR THE NEW ONE. I TOLD HIM I COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS ARGUMENT OF ALLEGED US-ISRAELI COLLUSION. AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE CLEAR, THE EGYPTIAN TACTIC COULD NOT BE READ IN ANY OTHER WAY THAN TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. THIS WAS HARDLY HELPFUL AT THIS DIFFICULT TRANSITION PERIOD AND I COULD ONLY ADVISE HIM AGAIN, AS A FRIEND, TO BE PATIENT. FAHMY WAS GLAD TO HAVE THE EXPLANATION ABOUT YOUR QUESTIONS TO MOHAMED RIAD, BUT NOTED THAT YOUR STATEMENT AT THE AIRPORT AFTER THE NATO MEETING SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT YOU PREFER CONTINUATION OF THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH. THE GOE POSITION ON A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND EARLY RECONVENING OF GENEVA WAS WELL KNOWN TO YOU AND HAS NOT CHANGED. I TOLD HIM YOU ARE AWARE OF IT, BUT IT WAS NOT UNREASONABLE TO PROBE RIAD FOR GOE'S LATEST THINKING FOLLOWING RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS. NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE TO STUDY THE MATTER AND DECIDE ON HOW IT WISHES PROCEED. WHILE HE AGREED, HE CONTINUED TO VOICE MISGIVINGS THAT WE PLAN TO RENEGE ON OUR COMMITMENT TO MOVE TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH AND TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO AVOID GOING TO GENEVA. FAHMY SUBSEQUENTLY TELEPHONED TO SAY HE WANTED YOU TO HAVE HIS CANDID REPLY TO THE POINTS RAISED, BUT ASKED THAT I STRESS THAT THIS DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN NO WAY AFFECTS HIS WARM FRIENDSHIP AND HIGH REGARD

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FOR YOU. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH ALL THE POINTS CITED REFTEL HAD BEEN MADE TO FAHMY BEFORE AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER (WITH EXCEPTION OF YOUR TALK WITH MOHAMED RIAD), I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR AN OPPOTUNITY TO MAKE ALL OF THEM IN A SINGLE PACKAGE. I COULD NOT DO SO DURING THE ASAD OR CODEL SOLARZ VISITS. I STARTED TO DO SO WHEN I SAW HIM LAST THURSDAY, BUT HE CUT ME OFF WHEN HE WAS CALLED BY THE PRESIDENT. WE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN TODAY FOR A LONGER CHAT.

2. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO CONVEY ALL THE POINTS CITED REFTEL, EMPHASIZING I WAS SPEAKING FOR YOU. I SAID WE UNDERSTAND THAT ANY PERIOD OF TRANSITION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIONS IS INEVITABLY DIFFICULT AND TRYING FOR OUR FRIENDS. NEVERTHELESS, FAHMY'S CONTINUOUS COMPLANTS ABOUT OUR ACTIONS AND IMPUGNING OF OUR

MOTIVIES ARE NOT HELPFUL IN GETTING US THROUGH THIS PERIOD WITH A MINIMUM STRAIN ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS. HE KNEW WE ARE COMMITTED TO PRODUCING PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS IN 1977 AND YOU HAD TOLD MOHAMED RIAD IN MEXICO CITY THAT YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO ASSUME THIS COMMITMENT WILL BE VIGOROUSLY ACTED UPON. YOU DEEPLY RESENT HIS CHARGE THAT OUR NEGATIVE VOTE ON THE ME RESOLUTION HAD BEEN DECIDED UPON BETWEEN US AND THE ISRAELIS FROM THE OUTSET.

3. AS I HAD ALREADY EARLIER TOLD HIM, YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW FAHMY COULD HAVE EXPECTED ANY OTHER RESPONSE TO WHAT WAS CLEARLY A PRESSURE TACTIC DIRECTED AGAINST THE NEXT US ADMINISTRATION. OUR VOTE WAS PROMPTED BY OUR CONVICTION THAT THIS WAS THE BEST WAY, IN THE FACE OF A DIFFICULT AND EMBARRASSING SITUATION CREATED BY THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION, TO PRESERVE A SITUATION IN WHICH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION COULD ACT PROMPTLY AND IN SECRET

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A BALANCED WAY TO RESUME THE NEGOTIATING MOMENTUM. ANY OTHER COURSE, COMING SO CLOSE AFTER OUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNSC CONSENSUS STATEMENT, WOULD HAVE EVOKED A STORM OF PROTEST FROM ISRAEL AND ITS SUPPORTERS. THIS WOULD AT ONCE HAVE PUT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ON THE DEFENSIVE AND OBLIGED IT TO DEMONSTRATE US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL.

4. I ALSO TOLD HIM OF YOUR PUZZLEMENT ABOUT HIS REPORT OF WHAT YOU HAD TOLD MOHAMED RIAD AND EXPLAINED THAT YOUR COMMENTS WERE INTENDED SIMPLY AS QUESTIONS AND NOT AS AN INDICATION OF YOUR OWN THINKING. YOU HAD NOTED FAHMY'S DECEMBER 13 REMARKS THAT HE BELIEVES THE APPROACH SHOULD BE COMPREHENSIVE AND AT GENEVA. THIS WILL, OF COURSE, ULTIMATELY HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. I ASSURED FAHMY, ON YOUR BEHALF, THAT THE URGENCY OF THE ME SITUATION IS WELL UNDERSTOOD AND THAT WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMIT CONFERENCES HAS HELPED TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR PROMPT AND VIGOROUS ACTION. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, A LITTLE PATIENCE IS NEEDED TO AVOID CLOUDING THE ATMOSPHERE.

5. FAHMY LISTENED ATTENTIVELY. AFTER I HAD FINISHED HE NOTED THAT I HAVE MADE ALL THE POINTS TO HIM BEFORE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. NOW HOWEVER, THEY WERE COMING FROM YOU. HE ASKED THAT I EXPRESS HIS APPRECIATION, BUT ALSO WANTED TO MAKE TWO OBSERVATIONS ON HIS PART. FIRST, WHAT I HAD JUST TOLD HIM WAS EXACTLY THE SAME KIND OF EXPLANATION OF PARTIAL OR EXTREME POSITIONS WE HAVE TAKEN IN THE

PAST IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI VIEWS. HE HAD HEARD IT MANY TIMES BEFORE. SECOND, NOTHING I HAD CONVEYED ALTERED THE FACT THAT THE USG STOOD ALONE WITH ISRAEL AGAINST A RESOLUTION THAT WAS VERY MILD. TO HIM IT PROVED BEYOND A DOUBT THAT IT WAS A "PERSONAL INTENERNAL PROBLEM" THAT HAD PROMPTED OUR VOTE. THIS LED TO SOME OBITER DICTA.

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ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO STATES, AMONG THEM OUR CLOSEST ALLIES AND SOME OF THE BEST FRIENDS OF ISRAEL, HAD VOTED FOR THE RESOLUTION. CONTRARY TO OUR EXPLANATORY STATEMENT TO HIM, (STATE 298498), THERE HAD BEEN NO REFERENCE TO THE PLO WHATSOEVER, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. WHATEVER WE MIGHT SAY IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, GOE CONCLUSION IS INESCAPABLE THAT USG AND ISRAEL HADWORKED OUR POSITION OUT IN ADVANCE. HAD IT BEEN OTHERWISE, WE COULD HAVE ABSTAINED. WHAT GOE IS LOOKING FOR, FAHMY STATED, IS "AN AMERICAN POSITION, NOT AN ISRAELI POSITION, EITHER FROM THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION OR THE NEW ONE."

6. I SAID I COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS ARGUEMENT THAT THE US VOTE ON THE ME RESOLUTION WAS THE RESULT OF US-ISRAELI COLLUSION. AS I HAD TOLD HIM SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE RESOLUTION, THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION CANNOT COMMIT THE EW ADMINISTRATION. THE EGYPTIAN TACTIC HAS BEEN CLEAR ALL ALONG, IT HAS NOT BEEN HELPFUL AT THIS DIFFICULT TRANSITION PERIOD AND I COULD ONLY ADVISE HIMONCE AGAIN, AS A FRIEND, TO BE PATIENT. GOE HAS ALREADY EFFECTIVELY SIGNALLED THE URGENCY IT ATTACHES TO A RESUMPTION OF THE ME PEACE PROCESS, BUT HE MUST NOW GIVE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION A CHANCE TO ASSESS THE SITUATION AND ARRIVE AT A JUDGMENT ABOUT HOW BEST TO PROCEED. FAHMY AGREED, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT GOE INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO SIGNAL THE URGENCY IT ATTACHES TO RESUMING THE ME PEACE PROCESS.

7. ADVERTING TO YOUR TALK WITH MOHAMED RIAD, FAHMY SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HAVE THE EXPLANATION I HAD GIVEN HIM THAT YOUR QUESTIONS WERE NOT INTENDED AS AN INDICATION OF YOUR OWN THINKING. HE WONDERED, HOWEVER, HOW THIS SQUARED WITH YOUR STATEMENT AT THE AIRPORT AFTER THE NATO MEETING, WHICH (AS RECEIVED BY GOE) SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT YOU PREFER A CONTINUATION OF THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH, ALTHOUGH THIS TIME INVOLVING BOTH EGYPT AND SYRIA. HE WAS

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SURPRISED THAT YOU HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD THE EGYPTIAN POSITION ON WANTING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATED AT GENEVA UNTIL HIS DECEMBER 13 STATEMENT. S YOU KNEW, THIS HAS BEEN THE EGYPTIAN POSITION FOR THE PAST YEAR OR MORE AND HAS NOT CHANGED. HE ASSUMED THAT I HAD REPORTED THE GOE POSITION AS SO FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED TO ME, THE PRESS, CODELS, ETC. I TOLD HIM HE COULD BE SURE YOU ARE WELL AWARE OF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION, BUT IT WAS NOT UNREASON- ABLE TO PROBE MOHAMED RIAD FOR GOE'S LATEST THINKING IN THE LIGHT OF THE RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS. HE AGREED, BUT CONTINUED TO VOICE MISGIVINGS THAT WE PLAN TO RENEGE ON OUR COMMITMENT TO OVE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN 1977 AND LOOK FOR WAYS TO AVOID GOING TO GENEVA.

8. AFTER I HAD RETURNED TO THE OFFICE, FAHMY TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT HE WANTED YOU THVE A CANDID REPLY TO YOUR POINTS SO THAT THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT HOW GOE FEELS. AT SAME TIME HE ASKED THAT I STRESS THAT THIS DIFFERENCE OF OPINON IN NO WAY AFFECTS HIS WARM FRIENDSHIP AND HIGH REGARD FOR YOU. EILTS UNQTE ROBINSON

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